

The Magna Carta

The Magna Carta was signed in June 1215 between the barons of Medieval England and King John. "Magna Carta" is Latin and means "Great Charter". The Magna Carta was one of the most important documents of Medieval England. The document was a written promise between the king and his subjects that he, the king, would govern England and deal with its people according to the customs of feudal law. Magna Carta was an attempt by the barons to stop a king from abusing his power.

TO ALL FREE MEN OF OUR KINGDOM we have also granted, for us and our heirs forever, all the liberties written out below, to have and to keep for them and their heirs, of us and our heirs:

Ordinary lawsuits shall not follow the royal court around, but shall be held in a fixed place.

No constable [police officer] or other royal official shall take corn or other movable goods from any man without immediate payment, unless the seller voluntarily offers postponement of this.

In future no official shall place a man on trial upon his own unsupported statement, without producing credible witnesses to the truth of it.

No free man shall be seized or imprisoned, or stripped of his rights or possessions, or outlawed or exiled, or deprived of his standing in any other way, nor will we proceed with force against him, or send others to do so, except by the lawful judgment of his equals or by the law of the land.

To no one will we sell, to no one deny or delay right or justice.

All merchants may enter or leave England unharmed and without fear, and may stay or travel within it, by land or water, for purposes of trade, free from all illegal exactions [payment obtained by force], in accordance with ancient and lawful customs.

In future it shall be lawful for any man to leave and return to our kingdom unharmed and without fear, by land or water, preserving his allegiance to us, except in time of war, for some short period, for the common benefit of the realm [kingdom]. People that have been imprisoned or outlawed in accordance with the law of the land, people from a country that is at war with us, and merchants - who shall be dealt with as stated above - are excepted from this provision.

- Magna Carta, 1215

<http://avalon.law.yale.edu/medieval/magframe.asp>